

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4504

July 21, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

As you know, I have long been a proponent of increasing our nation's production of solar energy as part of a broader effort to transform our energy system, create millions of new jobs, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Although the solar cell was invented in the United States, other nations such as Japan, Germany, and Spain have outpaced America in solar installations. China and India have each announced solar development plans of 20,000 megawatts in ten years. Five of the top ten solar panel makers are now from China. We are falling behind other nations, and this has to change.

I believe we can lead in solar energy production, and win the race with other nations for solar jobs. To do so, we need to put in place the policies to make solar more cost-competitive, and create opportunities for solar businesses to invest in manufacturing in the United States.

That is why I introduced S. 3460, The Ten Million Solar Roofs Act of 2010, which will help our nation lead the world in solar energy development. My legislation would, when fully implemented and combined with other existing federal and state efforts, bring 30,000 to 40,000 megawatts or more of new solar energy online over a ten year period. It would provide incentives to help families, businesses, and schools purchase and install solar. According to the solar industry, every megawatt of solar installed supports 24 jobs, so this legislation would also create hundreds of thousands of jobs in solar manufacturing, installation, and supply chain, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This is a real win-win-win for America.

The Ten Million Solar Roofs Act is co-sponsored by 16 Senators. The Obama Administration Department of Energy testified favorably on this bill to the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. It is supported by the Solar Energy Industries Association, the National Association of State Energy Officials, the National Congress of American Indians, the Sierra Club, the Natural Resources Defense Council, The Wilderness Society, Defenders of Wildlife, the Center for Biological Diversity, the Western Lands Project, and Environment America.

My legislation authorizes \$250 million for competitive grants in fiscal year 2012, and such sums as necessary from 2013-2021. The Department of Energy has said that we could meet and exceed the ten million solar system goal over a ten year period, if we provide the right mix of incentives, which we can do with S. 3460 if we pass and fund it.

In order to achieve this worthwhile goal for solar deployment, I respectfully request that you include and fund S. 3460, as amended and passed by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, in your energy legislation. With an investment of \$250 million in fiscal year 2012, and \$500 million annually from 2013-2021, we could create hundreds of thousands of jobs in the United States while we also reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This would be a strong investment in sustainable energy that would positively impact millions of homes and businesses. I appreciate your consideration of this request, and look forward to working with you as the Senate debates energy legislation.

Sincerely,



BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator